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COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT Reorganization of PCWM (Panstwowe Centrum Wyszkolienia Morskiego)/Teacher's Comments re Education/Attitude of Youth/Religion under the Soviets

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Reorganization of PCWM

1. "In 1951 the PCWM (Panstwowe Centrum Wyszkolienia Morskiego) (State Central Organization for Maritime Training) had four training ships: DAR POMORZA, ZEW MORZA, JANEK KRASINSKI and HENRYK RUTKOWSKI.
2. "The failure of the 'peace' voyage of these ships to Leningrad in April-May 1951 was the immediate cause of the liquidation of the PCWM training school. The liquidation started in July 1951 and was completed by 1 Jan 52. The 'peace' voyage had been made without prior permission from either Warsaw or Moscow authorities. (fnu) Michalowski, the head of PCWM, had received no permission from the Polish Ministry of Shipping because (fnu) Dembowicz, one of its directors, opposed him in every way. Michalowski refused to return to Stettin when radioed to do so, and was called to account in Warsaw after the voyage. He must have managed to whitewash himself with the authorities because he returned to Gdynia in good graces in Dec 51, then left to become chief of 'Widzial Kadrow' at the Ministerstwo Zeglugi in Warsaw.

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3. "Instead of one center there are now three separate merchant training establishments:

- (a) Morske Technikum Mechaniczne,
Ulica Czerwonych Kosynierow, Gdynia
- (b) Technicum Navigacyjne,
Alleja Piastow, Stettin
(corresponds to the Widzial Navigacyjne in the old Szkoła Morska.)
- (c) Technicum Rybolowstwa Morskiego,
Alleja Zjednoczenia 3, Gdynia

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4. "The liquidation was supervised by (fnu) Jurewicz. During the liquidation period, the staff was purged of 15 'unreliable' teachers. Those dismissed included:

Włodzimierz Budzewicz - Chief of the Szkoła Jungow, a career Army officer imprisoned by the Germans during World War II.

Piotr Harasimowicz - An 'educator'. Had belonged to the Waczek Brigade and fought at Arnhem.

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Frontiszek Wierzbicki - Geography master. His father was a forestry inspector.

5. "All subject matter now taught at Polish schools (including the maritime schools) is heavily interpolated with Marxism. Most distorted is history and the part Christianity has played in our civilization. In all history books Christ is represented as a myth, a product of the economic relations of the time. He is alleged to have existed only in the hopes and dreams of the ancient slaves for a redeemer. The years BC and AD are called 'before' or 'of' our era /p.n.e and n.e/. The history books overcharged with Marxism are so dry and boring that nobody can read them with interest. The pupils feel some opposition against such treatment of history and show it by learning only the absolute minimum required in order to pass. This is possible since history is not among the important subjects today. Whenever the lies are put on too thick there is open reaction. In 1949 at Ropka, e.g., the curriculum required that the Polish Communist troops in the USSR during World War II were the acme of perfection and lived under perfect conditions. A boy got up red in the face and shouted at the teachers: 'You lie, all this is not true, my father was there himself and he said that they even had vermin!' When in 1948 the first Soviet-sponsored history textbook came out nobody understood what it was all about. The author had tried to make a synthesis of history as it really was and of Marxism which prescribes that 'the role of the people' in history should be given the dominant place. Now Polish history does not lend itself to such treatment as the country was sparsely populated in the old times and people lived in very small groups where individuals always played a great part. This history was not only a falsification but incomprehensible; it had simply to be learnt by heart. Much rote learning has to be practised to this day. Since 1948, three further textbooks of history have come out. They are still provisional, though written by persons affiliated with the Moscow Academy.

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6. "Altogether it is a very hard job to be a teacher and many would like to chuck it, but they cannot. There are only three ways of doing so: (a) If your contract is at an end and the authorities themselves refrain from rehiring you; (b) If you fall ill and can either persuade or bribe a doctor to issue a certificate declaring you unfit for the job; (c) To neglect your duties so shockingly that you are dismissed. The last method is dangerous as you may be punished in addition to dismissal. So willy-nilly the older teachers must stick to their jobs, but no young people choose the teaching profession of their own free will. The young teachers in Poland today are mainly recruited from among young people of undesirable social origin who have been refused admission to a university. Owing to the great shortage of teachers they are admitted to teachers' seminaries.

7. "All literature is carefully censored in Poland today. All books in any way touching upon the Pilsudski period have been removed from libraries and bookshops. The older librarians try to do whatever they can to save good books from destruction, by removing them from the shelves and storing them in cellars to escape detection by controlling authorities. From the bookshops even the most innocent books are withdrawn, sometimes for the sake of one or two undesirable sentences; e.g. in 1950 a book called Patrol Beskidski by one Djakowski was withdrawn. It was a 'positive' work but written in the scout spirit which was considered unsuitable. The description of a polar voyage by the Polish explorer, Centkiewicz, was republished in 1950 with significant omissions. In one chapter the author had told quite en passant that on a small island his expedition had met a Soviet one returning home and had asked them to take back mail. The Soviet expedition had refused to take any. This passage was removed from the new edition.

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8. "There is a strict prohibition of both import and export of books. On putting out to sea and on return sailors are searched for books and papers; for example, NOWY DROGI was confiscated from a sailor. There is no freedom to order books and papers from the USSR even, particularly if they concern Communist ideology. Even the Polish marine authorities cannot order any books from Moscow directly; they get them only if they have been translated into Polish or are being distributed in Russian from Warsaw.

9. "In all fields only books consonant with the Communist ideology are available. If a book concerns an objective problem or science it has at least to be provided with a preface in which the author pays tribute to the USSR and Stalin, such a preface serving as a link between the new system and the old material of the book. In future this procedure will not be considered sufficient: all the new books planned and based exclusively on Soviet science - nauka radziecka - will have to actively condemn the West.

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10. Attitudes of Young People

the spirit of the population is breaking slowly under the stress of Communist oppression. Whatever resistance and opposition there is - and there is a lot of it - is forced into silence by the espionage system of the regime. In 1947 political discussions among strangers on railway trains were very frequent. When PPR and PPS were merged in 1948 they still occurred, although people started being more careful. Now they are quite unthinkable. It seems that some of the youth has been won over by the regime, although it is impossible to say to what an extent. The Communist regime is something very strong, and strength has always impressed the young. Secondly, they play very ably on the conflict of old and young. They give to understand that old people as such are non-capable, that the world and the future belong to the young. The old generation are attacked as reactionaries who lost Poland: the young will win it back by other means. For a time at Repka the son of a friend and a very active ZMP member. He was insatiable in his curiosity for the West and his thirst for knowledge in general; the above are largely his views. According to him the best heads in ZMP imagine that some day and somehow they will shake off Soviet domination and establish a Communist paradise in Poland. Actually it is very difficult to determine what proportion of the youth has been won over and what has not. In 1950 at a ZMP meeting at Torun in the Wojewodstwo Pomorskie. About 200 boys attended. ZMP had called the meeting in order to enlist the aid of the youth in the collectivization drive. The speakers emphatically described every individual peasant as an exploiter. Only one boy contradicted them. He was the son of a small farmer who had worked half his life in the US in order to be able to buy himself a small farm in Poland. The boy related his father's struggle and wanted to know how he could be called an exploiter. As the

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meeting was superintended by UB nobody dared to support the boy. The organizers just passed his speech over without comment. If they were free, 95% of the boys would be against the regime and about 5% would favour it. However, the picture is confused by opportunists and careerists.

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11. "One factor will always keep the youth against the present regime. This is its abject subservience to the USSR. Whatever their ideology - even if it is Communist - Polish boys will always bitterly resent the fact that the Polish army, navy, railway, etc. are virtually Soviet. Paradoxical as this may sound, Poland would be much more loyal towards Communism if the Communists did not make such great efforts to keep it loyal.
12. "The attitude of today's youth cannot be judged by its behaviour, which is determined by fear of the consequences of any rash word of action, thought for the future, the desire to graduate from college, etc. The youth has no chance to show its spirit. That will appear only in battle when the war starts. Any active resistance is meaningless under present circumstances. They keep quiet, see through the tricks of the regime very well and hope that the war will solve all problems.
13. "As regards the Polish emigration in the West, its influence is not too great in Poland. One of the weaknesses of the Poles is that they always believe too much in authorities and think too little themselves. Among the emigres there is no great politician or great personality to capture their imagination and to figure as an authority. Comparatively little is known of the emigres and no importance attached to their conflicts; it is thought that they will be united when necessary. It is also thought that the approaching military conflict will be so worldwide that national armies will play no great part except perhaps on their own soil and at a psychological moment. Therefore, political activity is considered more important than the sword and no very great hopes are placed on such military men as Anders. The other well-known name is Mikolajczyk. Both are thought ambitious but lacking the quality of leadership.
14. It is all very well to talk of resistance to the regime - and that certainly exists - but in the form of a general 'malaise,' an unhappiness, a discontent. Actually the system rules not only the bodies of men but the inner life, the thoughts, the will, the feelings of its victims. It is a mistake to believe that the power of the regime ends where the human soul begins, that man under Communism can be free in his thoughts. If a human being is prevented from intellectual and spiritual communion with his likes, from an exchange of opinion with others, all free thought ceases. He can make no true picture of what exists. He does not know what he himself thinks about things. He becomes stultified and brutalized. The people themselves do not know what has happened to them. They are unhappy; they are uncomfortable; they want to escape this state, but they have no principles, no ideas left, no plan for action, no will to act; they cannot win clarity of their own state of mind by discussing it with others, by sifting and comparing thoughts and plans.
15. "Religion is still a most important factor in today's Poland. It is a curious thing that although numerically the priests are the smallest group in the country, their reputation and authority is absolutely unimpaired, although the regime has done its best to make them contemptible by trials, and by attempts to compromise and even criminalize them, the usual charges being tax evasion, dirty life or support to bandits.
16. "The attitude of the population is responsible for the fact that in all schools there are still morning prayers although the teachers wait in the passage until they are over, for teachers are forbidden to sanction prayers by their presence. In 1948 all crosses were removed from the classrooms. Since the Church-State agreement they have been hung up again though not on the main wall, mostly over the door. In

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boarding schools (such as PCWM) the discipline is stricter and in most cases there are no crosses. The papers put out by the Catholic Church are carefully read, and the faithful try to read between the lines. The editions are pitifully small, but the papers are treasured and passed from hand to hand.

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17. "All Stettin churches, save one, are full on Sundays. That one is the Kosciol Rzymko - Katolicki Polski Pod Wezwaniem Swiatego Piotra i Pavla on the Ulica Cloneczna. This church is well appointed, with several altars and many pictures and candles. It represents the Soviet efforts to establish a Polish 'national' church. The service is Catholic. The priests are trained in a special seminary in Lwow. [redacted] The good Catholics regard the 'national' church as a heresy; nothing is spoken or written about it. Its head is unknown. It has no popularity among the ordinary people. They believe that the priests serve the UB and will report the most trivial anti-regime thought they hear in confession.
18. "Great pressure is exerted on Catholic priests to become 'patriotic' priests. It is a wonder, actually, that so few succumb. Some priests, it is true, have passed examinations in Marxism-Leninism. This does not mean that they favor the regime. Such examinations are a condition for teaching in the schools.
19. [redacted] at the PCWM, up to Dec 51, [redacted] 100 boys from various parts of the country [redacted] Despite all the anti-religious pressure, at least 10 of these asked to go to mass on Sundays. The political leadership of the school took no immediate steps against these boys but qualified their examinations and appointment to jobs. The politruks took special pains also to examine such boys in Marxism and to force them to learn it. If the boys did learn their Marxism, nothing could be done to them for their religion as the concordate has a certain protective effect despite everything. The school took to other means to make churchgoing difficult: every Sunday the pupils were given something to do just at the time divine service was being celebrated - sometimes it was a general review, sometimes a ZMP meeting, sometimes a film matinee. Sport was also used as a deterrent, especially the 'bieg narodowy' or national race, which begins with local and district competitions, and necessitates much training, all during church services. In spring and autumn there was 'voluntary' work in the fields.
20. [redacted] Christianity is the only philosophy in Poland which can hold its own against Communism. Every other idea is undermined and discredited. The Christians, however, are unaffected and the Church has made many proselytes in the last years from among formerly neutral people. Such neutral people now become practising Christians because they find spiritual elements in Christianity which they have always missed. There are also other factors: the Church is the only public manifestation which exists today of opposition to the USSR and of Polish patriotism, as it is common to all Poles (as opposed to Russians who have the Orthodox Church or no faith at all.) The attraction of the Church is largely emotional. It is a sort of communion in the national spirit, the only place where Poles can feel Poles together. It is also the only place where free speech still exists - the freest speech in Poland today is the Sunday sermon in church. That alone is a great attraction for a people stifled in their national feelings."

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